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ABSTRACT

This paper provides answers to frequently asked questions about the Preparing Future Faculty (PFF) program, a collaborative program that brings together clusters of doctoral and partner undergraduate institutions to plan programs that introduce graduate students to faculty life in a variety of campus environments. It discusses what new faculty members need to be prepared to do in their job, how PFF provides this preparation, how PFF benefits graduate students and faculty, how it differs from and goes beyond teaching assistant training programs, specific PFF program activities, what it takes to establish a PFF program, the need for doctoral institutions to partner with undergraduate institutions, linkages between institutions, the effects of PFF on graduate education, the problems that PFF may raise for graduate students, institutions that are currently conducting PFF programs, and how to find out more about PFF. A listing of PFF programs and contact persons is included. (MDM)

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
ABOUT PREPARING FUTURE FACULTY

Howard Anderson, Jerry G. Gaff, and Anne S. Pruitt-Logan

HE 031 357

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The Preparing Future Faculty (PFF) program is a national network of academic leaders exploring ways to better equip doctoral students for faculty work in the next century. PFF shapes graduate education preparation for the full range of faculty roles subsumed by the terms *teaching, research,* and *service.* It provides doctoral students with opportunities to observe and experience faculty responsibilities at a wide range of academic institutions with varying missions and diverse student bodies.

Universities with doctoral programs collaborate with a diverse set of postsecondary partner institutions in the clusters. Originally launched with 17 clusters, PFF currently has 15 clusters involved in the program. Although each cluster of institutions has a different approach, all seek to give doctoral students a fuller sense of the academic profession now while also preparing them for the professoriate in the years ahead.

The PFF program is relatively new. Yet it has already confirmed the value of PFF's defining concepts:

- Graduate student experience should include increasingly independent and varied teaching responsibilities, opportunities for scholarly growth, and chances to serve the department, campus, and community.
- Apprenticeship teaching, research, and service experiences should be planned developmentally to help students acquire greater professional competence as they progress toward the degree.
- Graduate students should learn about the academic profession and have direct experience with diverse kinds of institutions.
- Graduate programs should include formal systems for mentoring in teaching and other aspects of professional development.
- PFF experiences should be thoughtfully integrated into academic programs and sequences of degree requirements.

Since its inception in 1993, PFF has developed many effective strategies for achieving these aims. The results are so positive that the organizations sponsoring PFF – the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U), the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS), and The Pew Charitable Trusts – have decided to launch a second phase in 1997 that will extend to the year 2000. Below are answers to some questions frequently asked about PFF.

1. WHAT DO NEW FACULTY MEMBERS NEED TO BE PREPARED TO DO?

The Ph.D. is a research degree. Although competence in research is a necessary condition, it alone is no longer sufficient for a faculty career. In a very competitive job market, most hiring institutions have "raised the bar." In addition to scholarly expertise, institutions also demand a successful track record in teaching. Schools further look for a person who can contribute to department and institutional initiatives. Also, most academic positions are in institutions with missions and expectations for faculty that are markedly different from those in the research universities where future faculty receive their doctorates. These conditions are leading to new thinking about graduate education, and to programs that include preparation for teaching and service work as well as research. Learning about all of these matters is increasingly required if students are to successfully negotiate the job search process and secure a faculty position. The new faculty member who cannot manage the complex balancing act of performing well in the classroom while also making important contributions to the department and institution, has little chance of promotion or of tenure.

Moreover, faculty roles themselves are in transition. Consider that:

- The definition of scholarship is changing. It includes not just the scholarship of discovery, but also the scholarship of integration, of application, and of teaching and learning;

- Undergraduate curricula are stressing coherence and purposefulness, requiring more collaboration among faculty;
- Students are becoming more diverse by race, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, and readiness for college-level study.
- The focus on student learning goals, and the assessment of their achievement, is becoming more widespread, making new demands on faculty;
- New computer and communications technologies are transforming teaching and learning;
- The knowledge base is expanding with more combinations and connections among interdisciplinary programs; and even graduate students from outstanding departments and universities will find themselves unlikely to get an academic position or succeed in one if they are not capable of dealing with these new realities. But adaptation to these important changes can be accelerated by preparing students who, when they become professors, are already introduced to the work, attitudes, and responsibilities of the profession.

2. HOW DOES PFF PROVIDE THIS PREPARATION?

Preparing Future Faculty programs provide two kinds of learning. First, they introduce graduate students to these issues and ideas through reading, study, and discussion. For example, courses and seminars are offered on college teaching; discussions are held about key concepts such as academic freedom and tenure; and students study the particular issues involved in teaching a discipline.

Secondly, PFF provides opportunities for graduate students to become acquainted with the professional lives of faculty members at institutions markedly different from the research universities where they are earning their degrees. These include liberal arts colleges, comprehensive universities, and community colleges. Faculty members at these institutions serve as mentors, giving students a chance to observe and experience the challenges in organizing undergraduate classes and in teaching a heterogeneous mix of students.

3. HOW DOES PFF BENEFIT GRADUATE STUDENTS AND FACULTY?

Survey responses of 357 graduate students who participated in PFF over the past two years reveal how much they value the understanding they gain of faculty roles and lives through PFF.

Lessons learned about the prominence teaching plays in faculty life was especially enlightening: how much time it takes, the relative importance of teaching at different institutions, the variety of students and classrooms from one institution to another. Students also reflected on what they had gained by working with mentors at different colleges, especially when mentor relationships were helpful and free of some of the pressures of judgment felt back at their home departments. Given the chance to better understand academic governance through involvement in committees, and to engage with mentors at a variety of institutions, graduate students respond enthusiastically. Typically treated like junior faculty members, students reported gaining a sense of the complexities, problems, and gratifications of the academic profession through their exposure to a number of different settings.

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Benefits of the PFF experience were evident in the *confidence* that students spoke of repeatedly: confidence in knowledgeably putting together job applications and resumes, confidence when interviewing for jobs, and above all, confidence when they entered classrooms, committee meetings, and research settings as new faculty members. As one PFF graduate put it, "As a result of my professional training in the future faculty program, I have been able to develop an excellent rapport with the students I teach and, yet, demand that they take responsibility for their work....I was exposed to aspects of a professor's life, such as committee work....therefore I have been able to successfully balance responsibilities that I have to the Faculty Association on campus, with my teaching and research."

Faculty members at research universities and at partner institutions also found that working with graduate students in PFF enhanced their professional development, often in ways they had not fully anticipated. For those serving as mentors on the partner campuses, benefits began through their satisfaction in contributing to the professional competence of a graduate student colleague. Further, the professors reported that the relationship made them more reflective about their own teaching, indeed that it sharpened their awareness of how they carried out several of their professional duties.

4. HOW DOES PFF DIFFER FROM TEACHING ASSISTANT TRAINING NOW OFFERED AT MANY UNIVERSITIES?

Many university departments do not employ graduate students as teaching assistants. Those that do usually provide some preparation that focuses

on issues of classroom management. More fully developed programs may help TAs become conscious of pedagogical issues and strengthen their abilities as classroom teachers. Because TA programs stem from a graduate department's teaching needs, however, the TA's experience rarely extends beyond a small set of courses, and almost never beyond the graduate institution itself, or into the issues of professional life.

5. WHAT ARE SOME SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMS OFFERED AT PARTICIPATING PFF UNIVERSITIES AND THE ASSOCIATED COLLEGES?

Each cluster of institutions has been encouraged to develop its own specific activities. PFF comes to life in dozens of particular activities that are located in departments, throughout the university, or in the partner institutions. For example:

Departments are:

- revising doctoral guidelines to provide PFF experiences for students planning academic careers;
- inviting doctoral alumni to campus to discuss how their careers do or don't connect with what they received in their graduate education;
- organizing forums for faculty members to describe and analyze their professional lives;
- drawing on faculty from diverse institutions to offer a course on teaching the department's discipline;
- providing a sequence of supervised teaching experiences that build on earlier experiences;
- offering a seminar on professional issues;
- creating forums to discuss faculty histories, career paths, and alternative professional lifestyles; and
- providing support for graduate students to attend professional meetings with faculty and to make presentations.

University-wide activities include:

- offering a seminar on general issues of college teaching;
- organizing a seminar on professional and career issues taught by faculty and administrators from diverse institutions and held on different campuses;
- discussing teaching in a multicultural setting and teaching about diversity;
- offering certification programs in PFF or in teaching and noting this accomplishment on students' transcripts;
- explaining academic governance systems and inviting graduate students to attend faculty meetings or committee meetings;
- providing formal progression for graduate teaching assistants with proper titles and more pay to reflect expanded responsibilities or professional growth;
- helping graduate students develop portfolios documenting expertise in research, teaching, and service; and
- training faculty to mentor graduate students.

It is often graduate students who are most effective in persuading both graduate faculty and administrators of the value of PFF

Other postsecondary institutions are engaging graduate students by:

- discussing the missions and various academic cultures of different institutions;
- assigning them a teaching mentor;
- inviting them to teach a unit, or an entire course, and get feedback;
- inviting them to attend faculty, committee, or department meetings and to later discuss their interpretations;
- inviting them to shadow a professor or administrator and discuss the activities observed;
- arranging opportunities to discuss graduate school experience with undergraduate students;
- inviting them to participate in faculty development activity;
- participating with them in some of the departmental and university-wide activities described above.

6. WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO ESTABLISH A PFF PROGRAM?

It takes an institutional decision to more closely align graduate study with the realities of faculty work. Ideally, a PFF program enjoys commitment to its principles from the university administration, academic departments, and partner institutions. Commitment is something that grows gradually as individuals gain more experience with PFF programs, see the benefits, and compare their views with colleagues in other PFF programs. It is possible — and often more effective — to start with a small pilot PFF effort.

Experience has shown that it is often graduate students who are most effective in persuading both graduate faculty and administrators of the value of PFF. After all, it is *their* careers and *their* lives. They can be articulate advocates.

Several administrators have confirmed that startup costs for PFF programs are minimal. To launch PFF programs, most universities have tapped into several sources of funds, including the graduate school, other academic administrative budgets, academic departments, the faculty development program, and special strategic initiatives.

7. WHY DO WE NEED PARTNER INSTITUTIONS? CAN'T RESEARCH UNIVERSITIES DO IT ALONE?

Collaboration with partner institutions, diverse in their missions and their student bodies, is essential to Preparing Future Faculty programs. The involvement of faculty members from these settings makes it possible for university graduate students to

experience first-hand what it is like to be a professor at one or several of the educational settings where graduates are likely to get jobs. Faculty members and administrators at partner institutions reveal what they look for in hiring new faculty. These revelations often serve as a powerful catalyst for change in graduate programs. University faculty members typically have little experience in teaching at a liberal arts college, regional state university, or community college. They must rely on their colleagues in those settings to provide information. Indeed, the prestige hierarchy that permeates higher education fosters stereotypes of other types of institutions. By bringing faculty together across different types of institutions, stereotypes are broken down and everyone gains a more accurate understanding of the academy.

Committed cooperation, first-hand experience, mentoring – these are the concepts that PFF emphasizes. Acting independently, a university graduate program could, of course, provide students with information about the broad range of postsecondary academic institutions in the United States. But PFF believes that more than an academic introduction is needed to make a pronounced difference in a new professor's readiness to engage the multiple responsibilities faced simultaneously in a first job.

8. HOW DO OTHER COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES LINK WITH THE DOCTORAL UNIVERSITY AND ITS STUDENTS?

Most institutional clusters emerge with university administrators or faculty members making an initial contact with their colleagues at nearby institutions. Graduate deans, for example, may hold a meeting to explore collaborative possibilities.

But talk won't go far, we've found, without the energetic commitment of faculty from both the university and institutional partners. For institutional partners to become engaged, and to remain so, they need to be convinced that they, too, can benefit from working with competent graduate students. Occasions for getting to know such students at an early stage go a long way to attracting college faculty to become part of a partner institution.

Such collaboration demands time-consuming planning, consultation, and reflection from already fully-engaged college faculty members. But virtually all partners report significant rewards. Utilizing existing connections between local faculty and graduate students employed part-time at their colleges can be a valuable step in turning a basically economic relationship into a professional development opportunity for a partner institution.

Committed cooperation, first-hand experience, mentoring – these are the concepts that PFF emphasizes.

Some PFF clusters have emerged as a result of the initiative taken by college faculty—not university faculty—seeking to experience the benefits of working with possible future colleagues. Partner institutions can boast that their reputation as fine teaching institutions have made them prized sites for preparing future college professors; that their professors can guide younger colleagues in teaching, much like residency programs guide medical students in preparation for their careers.

9. DOESN'T INCORPORATING A PFF PROGRAM REQUIRE BASIC CHANGES IN GRADUATE EDUCATION?

Yes, it requires a certain amount of re-thinking and re-shaping of graduate programs. Traditionally, graduate faculty members and departments focus, primarily, on leading graduate students to the cutting edge of research. Little regard is given to the practical consequences of that one-dimensional approach to graduate education. PFF calls on faculty to focus on all of the needs and responsibilities of faculty members. This necessitates new partnerships with hiring institutions to identify the needs and to provide experiences in diverse settings. These changes are serious but hardly earth shattering. In fact, PFF programs have been fairly easy to accommodate within traditional departments. However, we must stress that the needs of a substantial number of students will not be met adequately if PFF is approached as an add-on project.

There are several familiar mechanisms for incorporating a PFF program that make change less threatening. Some institutions have made PFF a series of three or four credit-bearing courses, partially supported by tuition dollars. Others have added a PFF component to an existing teaching assistant or faculty development program. Some existing TA programs have transformed themselves into PFF programs, with TA development components.

Most departments have specialized tracks with specific requirements, such as clinical, school, or developmental tracks in psychology. It is quite possible for students seeking a faculty career to define preparing for the future professoriate as a track, to define the requirements, and to certify completion. In fact, several universities offer certificates or masters degrees in college teaching.

10. WHAT SORTS OF PROBLEMS DOES PFF RAISE FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS?

Finding the time, arranging schedules, the logistics involved in driving or getting rides to the partner colleges—these problems head the list for graduate students, who are likely to be busy with a previously arranged program of studies and work. How can they find time to travel to an en-

tirely different site? More important, once they get there, will they be able to stay long enough to establish a useful relationship with a new mentor, classrooms, students—a new institution?

Although graduate students report much support from their department chairs and faculty members, they also report that some graduate professors discourage their participation in PFF. These professors see PFF as hindrances to research responsibilities and adding to the time it takes to complete the doctorate.

There are no easy solutions, but PFF provides an array of evidence—programs and people—showing that the obstacles can be overcome, and that it is worth the effort. The most compelling evidence is that from among the 357 graduate students surveyed, all but three said they would recommend their PFF program to others.

11. WHAT INSTITUTIONS ARE CONDUCTING PFF PROGRAMS?

In the summer of 1994, 17 clusters of institutions received support from The Pew Charitable Trusts to create PFF model programs. Each of the 17 established clusters of diverse institutions, and a total of 85 different institutions were involved. Five doctoral producing universities received grants of $170,000 to establish PFF programs. They were: Arizona State University, Howard University, Northwestern University, University of Minnesota, and University of Washington. Twelve others received small grants for specific initiatives to start PFF programs and join the national effort.

In the second phase, launched in 1997, all 17 clusters of institutions were invited to indicate whether they were interested in continuing. Fourteen submitted applications, from which 10 were selected. The 10 include the original clusters that received large grants and five others: Duke University, Florida State University, Marquette University with the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, the University of Cincinnati, and the University of Kentucky.

In addition, several other universities have established "PFF-like" activities with their own funding; we invited several to submit proposals. Ten did so, and five of this group were selected to participate in phase two. They are: Indiana University, Syracuse University, University of Colorado-Boulder, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, and University of New Hampshire.

PFF has also been working with several learned societies in the natural sciences, mathematics, social sciences, and humanities to seek funding to establish model PFF programs in graduate departments and to bring the results to the attention of their members through annual meeting sessions, publications, and other forums. In short, a number of different kinds of academic organizations are eager to work with this new approach to graduate education.

12. WHAT ARE THE PURPOSES OF THE SECOND PHASE EFFORT?

The primary purpose is to move from a demonstration project to institutionalizing PFF as a new way of providing graduate education for aspiring professors. Participants are working on plans to "scale up" the program so that all students interested in exploring an academic career may have access to a PFF program. Some teaching assistant development programs, such as that at the University of Minnesota, are transforming themselves into full blown PFF programs. Others, like Florida State, are adding PFF components to programs.

13. HOW CAN I LEARN MORE ABOUT THE PFF CONCEPTS AND PROGRAMS?

A number of occasional papers on different aspects of PFF are being published by the PFF program. These will be available at both AAC&U and CGS offices. These include a manual on establishing new PFF programs, a guide for graduate students about the value of a PFF experience, an essay on the similarities and differences of PFF and TA development programs, and an assessment of the results of such programs.

Information about PFF is available on the worldwide web sites of both AAC&U and CGS.

A consultation service will be available to institutions and departments interested in establishing a PFF program. Starting in Fall 1997, a consultant will be available to assist with specific purposes identified by clients. The Pew grant will provide an honorarium to the consultant, and the client institution will provide travel, room, and board.

A PFF website is in development at **www.Preparing-Faculty.org**

14. HOW CAN I FIND OUT MORE?

Feel free to contact the national leaders coordinating the PFF Program.

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AAC&U

The Association of American Colleges and Universities is the national voice for liberal learning. Its membership includes public and private colleges and universities. Through national initiatives, networking, conferences, and publications, AAC&U advances and strengthens liberal education and promotes its integration with professional programs.

CGS

The Council of Graduate Schools is an organization of institutions of higher education in North America engaged in graduate education, research, scholarship, and the preparation of candidates for advanced degrees. Its membership includes 410 universities, granting 97 percent of doctoral degrees awarded in the United States.

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